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**Americans sharply divided over whether Biden acted wrongly in son's businesses, AP-NORC poll shows**

By COLLEEN LONG and EMILY SWANSON  
Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — About half of Americans say they have little or no confidence that the Justice Department is handling its investigation into Hunter Biden in a fair and nonpartisan way, and 1 in 3 are highly concerned about whether President Joe Biden may have committed wrongdoing related to his son's business dealings, according to a new poll. But the political divide is stark.

Sixty-six percent of Republicans -- and just 7% of Democrats -- are very or extremely concerned about whether Joe Biden committed wrongdoing when it comes to his son's business dealings, according to the poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

Overall, Democrats are far more wary of faulting the president at all with regard to his son's business dealings.

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President Joe Biden's son Hunter Biden leaves after a court appearance, Wednesday, July 26, 2023, in Wilmington, Del.

Associated Press

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## Americans sharply divided over whether Biden acted wrongly in son's businesses, AP-NORC poll shows

Continued from Front

"The way I look at it, if Biden did something wrong, then he should be held accountable," said Pilar DeAvila-Pinsley 60, a New York Democrat. "But there is no proof of this."

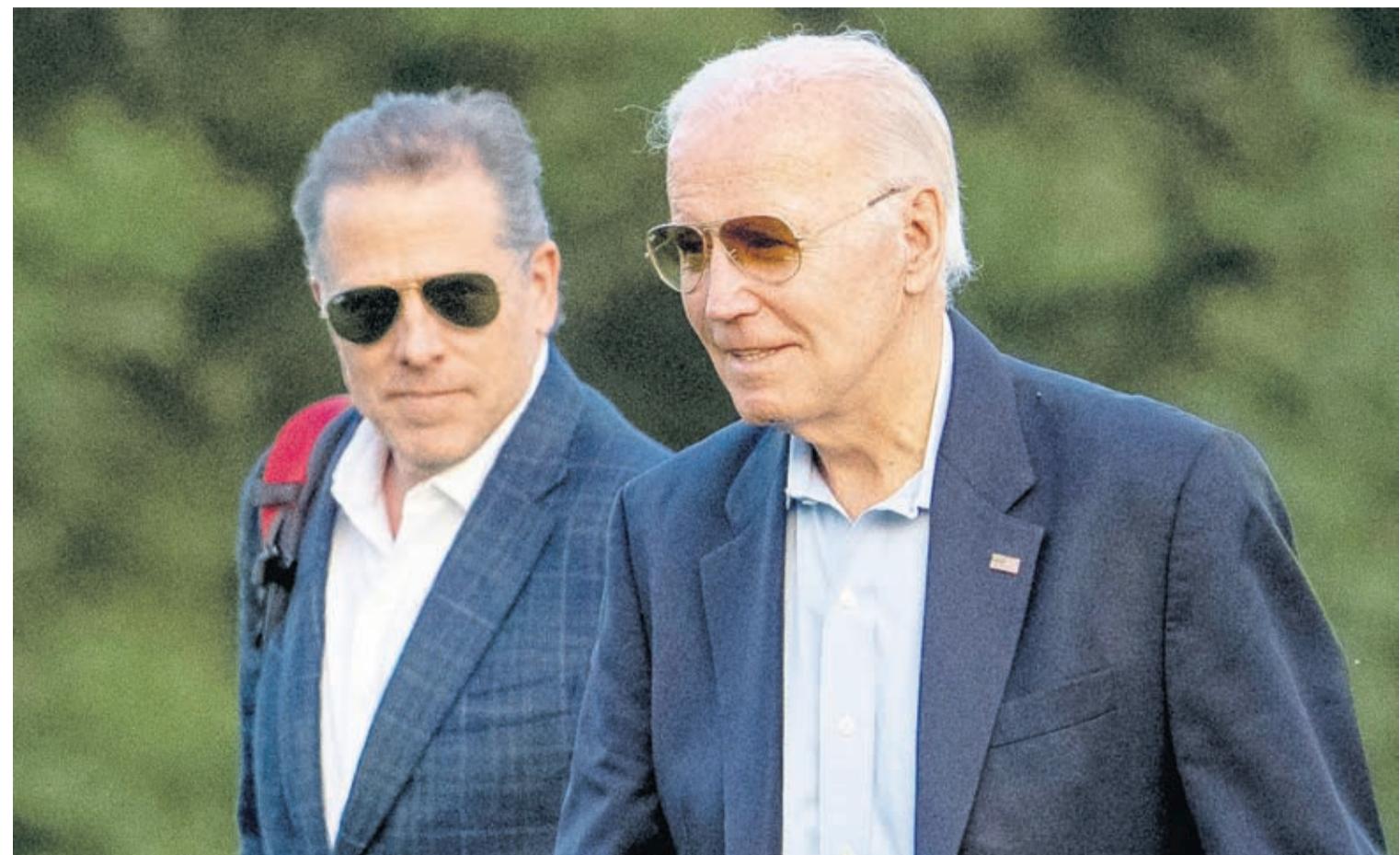
The poll was conducted just before House Speaker Kevin McCarthy launched an impeachment inquiry aiming to link the president to the business dealings of his son and deflect attention from Donald Trump's legal peril as the two men battle anew for the White House.

The special counsel appointed by Attorney General Merrick Garland indicted Hunter Biden on gun purchase charges Thursday, an issue unearthed during the probe into his tax dealings. The investigation has continued after a plea deal fell apart this summer. Over the yearslong probe, federal prosecutors have not indicated Joe Biden is connected. And so far, Republicans have unearthed no significant evidence of wrongdoing by the elder Biden, who spoke often to his son as vice president and did stop by a business dinner with his son's associates. The White House, for its part, maintains Joe Biden was not involved in his son's business affairs.

Those assurances haven't stopped Americans from worrying, and shifts in White House explanations—from earlier insisting Biden had never spoken to his son about his overseas business dealings to now saying Biden was not in business with his son—have caused concern.

Derik Wieland, 47, a Republican who lives outside Raleigh, North Carolina, said Biden has already admitted to some of the issues. "I don't know any dad who doesn't know what his son is doing. I would be concerned about a dad who didn't know what his son was doing."

For Wieland, the allegations laid out by House Republicans are a sign of a larger



President Joe Biden, and his son Hunter Biden arrive at Fort McNair, Sunday, June 25, 2023, in Washington.

Associated Press

problem in Washington, one he believes ensnares Biden, too.

"A guy who has been in higher levels of power for ages, and kind of plays fast and loose with what he does," he said. "He's been there too long. Too many of them have."

The White House messaging shift was also concerning to 40-year-old Nicholas Zumbusch, an independent who lives in a Minneapolis suburb. He isn't fully convinced that Biden profited off his son's business dealings but thinks "it's very clear that Joe Biden lied about knowing about his son's business."

"The narrative changed, and then that narrative changed again," Zumbusch said.

The poll also found that just 19% of Americans are very or extremely confident that the Justice Department is handling its investigation in a fair and nonpartisan way. An additional 30% are somewhat confident, and 50% say they are not too confident or not at all confident.

That view is especially common among Republicans:

79% say they have little to no confidence in the fairness of the investigation. Even Democrats express mediocre levels of confidence: 33% are highly confident, 36% are somewhat confident and 29% have little confidence.

The political polarization is reflective of the larger divide in the U.S., and bright political lines have also been drawn around the validity of the 2024 election, and Trump's first impeachment.

An August AP-NORC poll, for example, found that 85% of Democrats but just 16% of Republicans approved of the Justice Department's indictment of Trump in the federal case involving allegations that he worked illegally to overturn results of the 2020 presidential election. There was a similar partisan divide in beliefs that Trump did something illegal in the Florida classified documents case, his role in what happened at the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, and his alleged attempt to interfere in Georgia's 2020 presidential vote count.

Zumbusch said he has con-

fidence in the rank-and-file Justice Department; it's the agency's leadership that troubles him.

"My big concern is the people who have connections with any administration that's in power," he said. "I feel like they tend to be influenced, whether it's Republicans in power, or Democrats in power. I think they feel their boss is the administration."

The poll shows a majority of Americans, 56%, say they've heard at least some about the investigations into Hunter Biden, although only 18% say they've heard a lot. Republicans are more likely than Democrats to say they've heard at least some about the investigations (68% to 51%) and that they've heard a lot (27% to 13%).

Among Republicans, those who say they've heard at least some about the investigations are more likely than those who have heard less to say they are highly concerned about whether Joe Biden committed wrongdoing (76% to 45%) and that they have little to no confidence that the Justice Department's

investigation is fair (88% to 60%).

Among Democrats, those who are paying at least some attention to the investigations are no more or less likely than others to be concerned about Joe Biden's role, and are actually somewhat more likely than those paying less attention to say they're highly confident in the Justice Department's investigation being fair, 42% to 24%.

Ryan Laiche, 44, a Democrat from Wheaton, Illinois, said if you are paying attention to the news, it's obvious Garland is working independently and fairly. House Republicans, he says, are hellbent on making Biden look bad to distract from Trump's crimes.

"It's an investigation looking for a crime," he said. "We knew this was going to happen when Republicans took over the House. They're so predictable. But they can't answer any of the questions ... was Biden involved? If he was, prosecute him, impeach him. If there's legitimate evidence. But therein lies the rub - there's no evidence." □

## Louisiana, 9 other states ask federal judge to block changes in National Flood Insurance Program

By KEVIN MCGILL  
Associated Press

**NEW ORLEANS (AP) —** Increases in federal flood insurance premiums that are projected to surpass 700% over the coming years are already leading people to back out of home purchases and will likely lead to an exodus of residents and businesses from southern Louisiana, officials told a federal judge Thursday in New Orleans. The testimony came in a hearing in a lawsuit Louisiana and nine other states filed against the federal government to block sharp increases in national flood insurance rates. A phase-in of the new rates began in 2021. Annual increases are limited to 18%. The Federal Emergency Management Agency said the new method of computing rates has resulted in reductions or little or no increase for most policy holders. But FEMA figures also show huge impending increases in some Louisiana ZIP codes. State and local officials who testified Thursday said the increases are expected to result in some people in working-class southern Louisiana to abandon their mortgages, try to sell homes that have been



Flood waters surround storm damaged homes on Aug. 31, 2021, in Lafourche Parish, La., as residents try to recover from the effects of Hurricane Ida.

in families for generations, or drop their insurance.

"We've already seen a slowdown in new building," said Matt Jewell, president of St. Charles Parish, west of New Orleans.

The implications go beyond blows to the real estate market and tax revenue. Officials said lower revenue could also hamper flood prevention and mitigation efforts. And some federal disaster programs require

people in certain areas to have flood insurance — which the officials argued is becoming unaffordable. State attorneys said during arguments before U.S. District Judge Darrel Papillion that participation in the National Flood Insurance Program requires that local governments adopt building-elevation policies and flood-control efforts that often require taxes — approved by voters believ-

ing the mitigation efforts will hold rates down.

"They turned us into liars," state Solicitor General Liz Murrill told Papillion. Papillion was hearing arguments on the federal government's motion to dismiss the suit and on the states' motion for an injunction blocking the rate increases pending further court proceedings. It was unclear if he would rule Thursday.

Florida, Idaho, Kentucky,

Associated Press

Mississippi, Montana, North Dakota, South Carolina, Texas and Virginia are the other states listed as plaintiffs, along with some local governments and flood control bodies in Louisiana. FEMA has said its new premium system is an improvement over past methods, incorporating data that wasn't used in the past, including scientific models and costs involved in rebuilding a home. The agency has said the old method could result in people with lower-valued homes paying more than a fair share, while those with higher-value homes pay relatively less. A return to the old system of calculating premiums would not guarantee a reduction of rates, Justice Department attorney Yoseph Desta argued.

He and other government attorneys argued Thursday that the new rate plan had been in the works for years, that the states had plenty of opportunity for input, and that the lawsuit, filed months after the phase-in began, was filed too late. They also argued the states have no standing to sue over the rates set by the National Flood Insurance Program. □

## Supreme Court pauses order curbing Biden administration efforts to block social media posts

By KEVIN MCGILL  
Associated Press

The U.S. Supreme Court on Thursday temporarily blocked a lower court order curbing Biden administration efforts to combat controversial social media posts on topics including COVID-19 and election security. White House communications staffers, the surgeon general and the FBI are among those affected by the order, which resulted from a lawsuit claiming the White House and executive branch agencies unconstitutionally squelched conservative points of view.

The administration asked the Supreme Court to put the order on hold while it prepares an appeal.

The lower court order was to take effect Monday. Thursday's Supreme Court order delays the effective date until Sept. 22. Plaintiffs in the lawsuit have until Wednesday to file a response.

A federal judge in north Louisiana previously issued a sweeping order on July 4 that effectively blocked multiple government agencies from contacting platforms such as Facebook and X (formerly Twitter) to

urge that content be removed. A panel of three judges on the New Orleans-based 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals last week significantly whittled down that order, eliminating some defendants and cutting away language that prohibited mere encouragement of content changes.

But the panel also said the administration had likely brought unconstitutional pressure on media platforms and it said officials cannot attempt to "coerce or significantly encourage" changes in online content. The softened order still went



A smartphone displays the apps for Facebook and Messenger in New Orleans, Aug. 11, 2019. The U.S. Supreme Court on Thursday, Sept. 14, 2023, temporarily blocked a lower court order curbing Biden administration efforts to combat controversial social media posts on topics including COVID-19 and election security.

Associated Press

too far, the administration said Thursday. The 5th Circuit ruling came "despite the absence of even a single instance in which an official paired a request to re-

move content with a threat of adverse action — and despite the fact that the platforms declined the officials' requests routinely and without consequence." □

## Planned Parenthood sues to expand South Carolina abortion access under strict new ban

By JAMES POLLARD  
Associated Press/Report for America

**COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP)** — Abortion providers urged South Carolina's highest court on Thursday to lengthen the narrow window when a pregnancy can be legally terminated under the state's strict new ban.

The conservative state's all-male Supreme Court last month upheld a so-called "fetal heartbeat" law commonly understood to restrict access after about six weeks of pregnancy, which is before most women know they're pregnant. However, the court's majority opinion noted that the medical definitions written by the Republican-dominated state Legislature gave unclear directions to doctors about when they can provide an abortion. In a footnote, Justice John Kittredge wrote that the court would "leave for another day" whether the language "refers to one period of time during a pregnancy or two separate periods of time."

Attorneys for Planned Parenthood believe they have an answer. In a complaint filed Thursday, they wrote that the ban should be interpreted to take effect after approximately nine weeks under the statute's



The legal team for Planned Parenthood South Atlantic speaks outside the South Carolina Supreme Court building in Columbia, S.C. on Tuesday, June 27, 2023.

Associated Press

language, because that's when most of the main parts of the eventual heart have developed.

"The court itself has raised this issue and we think it needs to answer this ambiguity that it's left open," Catherine Humphreville, an attorney for Planned Parenthood Federation of America, told The Associated Press.

"As it stands right now, providers are forced to take this more conservative approach because they are risking, essentially, jail time and the loss of their

licenses," they said. Spokespeople for both the South Carolina Senate majority leader and speaker of the House did not have responses Thursday afternoon to the lawsuit. Republican Gov. Henry McMaster will file a motion intervening in the case to "once again defend the heartbeat law and protect the right to life in South Carolina," according to a statement from spokesperson Brandon Charochak. The law prohibits most abortions after an ultrasound detects cardiac activity.

Doctors who violate the ban face up to two years imprisonment.

Cardiac activity can occur as early as six weeks into a pregnancy. The South Carolina General Assembly defined a "fetal heartbeat" as "cardiac activity, or the steady and repetitive rhythmic contraction of the fetal heart, within the gestational sac."

Planned Parenthood South Atlantic argues that the most cautious medical consensus suggests the major components of what ultimately becomes the

heart — the walls, valves, four chambers and electrical conduction system necessary for contractions — do not typically form before nine weeks of pregnancy. A decision in their favor would mark a big shift in the number of people able to legally obtain abortions at Planned Parenthood facilities in Columbia and Charleston. According to the complaint, around 91% of patients there have been denied abortions in the roughly three weeks since the latest ban took effect. About 58% of those unable to get abortions were nine weeks pregnant or less.

"It means the difference between turning away 50% of people and turning away 90% of people," Susanna Birdsong, the general counsel for Planned Parenthood South Atlantic, told the AP.

Abortion providers found themselves on the defensive after the state's highest court reversed course this summer from its January decision that a similar 2021 ban violated the right to privacy. Planned Parenthood South Atlantic Communications Director Molly Rivera said the group is now fighting "for every inch of ground" after failing to get the new law completely struck. □



Firefighters work to put out a fire that started at the Tissue Depot in Cheboygan, Mich., Wednesday, Sept. 13, 2023.

Associated Press

**CHEBOYGAN, Mich. (AP)** — People living near a northern Michigan paper mill that caught fire, filling the air with thick grey smoke,

emerged from their homes Thursday after sheltering in place for more than a day, as environmental officials found the local air quality

## Shelter in place lifted after fire at Michigan paper mill produces plumes of heavy smoke

had improved to safe levels. Plumes of smoke could be seen for miles around on Wednesday morning after the fire broke out at the Tissue Depot property in downtown Cheboygan, about 290 miles (466 kilometers) northwest of Detroit.

Fire crews contained the blaze to a storage building at the mill on Wednesday afternoon and they remained on the scene Thursday "putting out hot spots," officials said.

The Cheboygan County

Sheriff's Department said in a Facebook post that the EPA found that level of particulates in the air had diminished overnight "to safe levels." Roads around the fire scene remain closed around the fire scene and the public was advised to stay away from the area, the posting said.

No mill employees or firefighters were injured, Cheboygan Fire Chief Don Dailey said Wednesday.

The fire started in a part of the mill where no employees were working at

the time, Dailey said, and crews were alerted that there were several tons of plastic stored in the building.

Officials said Thursday that the cause of the fire remains unknown, but fire investigators with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and Michigan's fire marshal "are on scene to investigate the cause and origin of the fire." The owner of the building and the business owner are cooperating, officials said. □

## Britain, France and Germany say they will keep their nuclear and missiles sanctions on Iran

By STEPHANIE LIECHTENSTEIN

**Associated Press**

**VIENNA (AP)** — Britain, France and Germany announced Thursday they will keep their sanctions on Iran related to the Mideast country's atomic program and development of ballistic missiles. The measures were to expire in October under a timetable spelled out in the now defunct nuclear deal between Tehran and world powers.

In a joint statement, the three European allies known as E3 that had helped negotiate the nuclear deal, said they would retain their sanctions in a "direct response to Iran's consistent and severe non-compliance" with the accord, also known by its official name as Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action or JCPOA.

The measures ban Iran from developing ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons and bar anyone from buying, selling or transferring drones and missiles to and from Iran. They also include an asset freeze for several Iranian individuals and entities in-



**In this photo released by the Iranian Presidency Office, President Ebrahim Raisi, center, attends a ceremony to deliver the domestically built missiles to the armed forces as his Defense Minister Mohammad Reza Gharaei Ashtiani, left, Iran, on Aug. 22, 2023.**

**Associated Press**

volved in the nuclear and ballistic missile program. Iran has violated the sanctions by developing and testing ballistic missiles and sending drones to Russia for its war on Ukraine.

The sanctions will remain in place until Tehran "is fully compliant" with the deal, the E3 said.

The sanctions, according to the accord from eight years ago, were to expire on Oct. 18.

The 2015 nuclear deal meant to ensure that Iran could not develop atomic weapons. Under the accord, Tehran agreed to limit enrichment of uranium to levels necessary for nuclear power in exchange for the lifting of economic sanctions. In 2018, then-President Donald Trump unilaterally pulled the United States out of the accord, saying he would negotiate a stronger deal, but that did not happen. Iran began breaking the terms a year later and is now enriching uranium to nearly weapons-grade levels, according to a report by the United Nations' nuclear watchdog.

Formal talks to try to find a roadmap to restart the deal

collapsed in August 2022. The E3 have informed the European Union's foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell, about their decision, the statement said. Borrell, in turn, said he had forwarded the E3 letter to other signatories of the 2015 deal China, Russia and Iran.

The development comes at a delicate moment as the United States is preparing to finalize a prisoner swap with Iran that would include the unfreezing of Iranian assets held in South Korean banks worth \$6 billion. Iran's mission to the United Nations did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

U.S. State Department spokesman Matthew Miller told reporters that Washington was in touch with the European allies over "the appropriate next steps."

"We are working closely with our European allies, including members, of course, of the E3, to address the continued threat that Iran poses including on missiles and arms transfers with the extensive range of unilateral and multilateral tools that are at our disposal," he said. □



**Russian President Vladimir Putin, right, dances with then Austrian Foreign Minister Karin Kneissl as he attends the wedding of Kneissl with Austrian businessman Wolfgang Meilinger in Gamlitz, southern Austria, Saturday, Aug. 18, 2018.**

**Associated Press**

## She danced with Putin at her wedding. Now the A former Austrian foreign minister has moved to Russia

By EMMA BURROWS

**Associated Press**

**LONDON (AP)** — A former Austrian foreign minister who had invited Russian President Vladimir Putin to her wedding and danced a waltz with him at the 2018 reception said she has moved to St. Petersburg to set up a think tank there.

Karin Kneissl, 58, announced on messaging app Telegram on Wednesday that her ponies, which she has been keeping in Syria, were taken to Russia on a Russian military plane. Kneissl, from the right-wing Freedom Party, served as foreign minister from 2017

to 2019.

She was repeatedly criticized in Austrian and German media during that time for her pro-Russia views. Her dance with Putin came just months after Russia was accused of poisoning former spy Sergei Skripal, and his daughter Yulia, with nerve agent Novichok in the United Kingdom.

Kneissl said in her post that she moved her "books, clothes and ponies from Marseille to Beirut" in June 2022, after Russia invaded Ukraine, after which she says she was "banished" from France.

At the Eastern Economic

Forum in the far eastern Russian city of Vladivostok earlier this week, Kneissl told Russian state news agency Tass that she had set up the Gorki center a think tank associated with the state university in St. Petersburg. Because the think tank requires a lot of her time, she decided to move to Russia, she said.

The Gorki center, Kneissl told Tass, "deals, among other things, with issues of energy, migration and new alliances issues in which I am well versed, which also affect the Arab and Islamic world, with which I am familiar."

Kneissl also said on Telegram that "since apparently nothing is going on in Austria and Germany beyond the economic crisis, my relocation is becoming a political issue."

She added, in a swipe likely at her critics, that "the hatred that seeps out of Austria amazes not only me."

In an interview at the forum with Russian news agency RIA Novosti, Kneissl said, "it's not easy to move to Russia" because of the amount of paperwork involved but that she had already moved into an apartment she is renting in St. Petersburg. □

## Dominican Republic to close all borders with Haiti in a dispute over a canal

By MARTÍN ADAMES  
ALCÁNTARA and DÁNICA  
COTO

Associated Press

DAJABON, Dominican Republic (AP) —

The Dominican Republic's president announced Thursday he would close all borders with neighboring Haiti starting Friday in a dispute over a canal on the Haitian side that would use water from a river along their frontier.

President Luis Abinader said air, sea and land borders would close at 6 a.m. local time Friday and would remain shuttered "until necessary," signaling that last-minute talks between the countries had failed to head off the closure. It is a rare move for the Dominican Republic, and could hit economies in both countries, though it will be most acutely felt in Haiti.

The closure is a response to the excavation of a canal by a farming group on the Haitian side that targets waters from the Massacre River, which runs along the border shared by the two countries on the island of Hispaniola.

Abinader in recent days also suspended issuing visas to Haitians and closed the



**Dominican Republic security forces stand guard on a border bridge between Dajabón, Dominican Republic, and Haiti, Thursday, Sept. 14, 2023.**

Associated Press

border near the northern town of Dajabon, paralyzing a key economic lifeline for Haitians who buy and sell goods there several times a week. Those who live in Haiti but work in the Dominican Republic also cross the border daily.

"They are suffering a lot here in Dajabon, and in Haiti, too, because there are a lot of goods that are spoiling," said Haitian busi-

nessman Pichelo Petijon. "There are millions of dollars in losses."

Abinader accused Haiti of trying to divert water from the Massacre River, and said it would affect Dominican farmers and the environment.

The river is named after a bloody clash between French and Spanish colonizers in the 1700s, and it also was the site of a mass

killing of Haitians by the Dominican army in 1937.

On Wednesday, Haiti's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said it was meeting with Dominican officials in the Dominican Republic to talk about the situation. The Dominican government said Thursday that the meeting had stretched into its second day but provided no details. The meeting was continuing when Abinader

announced he would close all borders starting Friday.

Meanwhile, Jean Brévil Weston, leader of a farmers' group near the border, was quoted by Haiti radio station Magik9 as saying that he will not stop working on the canal.

"It's the canal or death," he was quoted as saying. "We are ready to be buried by the canal."

The office of Haitian Prime Minister Ariel Henry could not be immediately reached for comment.

Claude Joseph, Haiti's former prime minister and an aspiring presidential candidate, said the excavation does not violate any agreements or treaties between the two countries, and urged workers to keep working on the project. Joseph previously clashed with Abinader over an unrelated issue, prompting the Dominican president to ban him from his country.

A line already was forming Thursday at the Dominican border town of Dajabon, with dozens of people seeking to cross into Haiti for various reasons, many with heavy bags balanced on their heads or suitcases in hand. □

## Ex-Guatemala anti-corruption prosecutor granted asylum in U.S.

By SONIA PÉREZ D.  
Associated Press

GUATEMALA CITY (AP) —

The United States govern-

ment has granted asylum to Guatemala's former lead anti-corruption prosecutor two years after he was fired

and fled the country under threat of arrest.

An internationally respected prosecutor, Juan Francisco Sandoval had participated in the prosecution of former President Otto Pérez Molina and his Vice President Roxana Baldetti, who resigned and was convicted and sentenced of corruption, as well as four other presidents, including outgoing President Alejandro Giammattei.

"Granting me political asylum is additional proof of the political persecution of which I am a victim for having participated in the investigation of illegal political-economic networks that are embedded in the state," Sandoval said in a

telephone interview with The Associated Press. He said those networks have involved six administrations, "including the current one of Giammattei."

The deterioration of Guatemala's justice system accelerated in 2019 when then-President Jimmy Morales forced the exit of the United Nations-backed anti-corruption mission. Sandoval, as the attorney general's special prosecutor against impunity, worked closely with the foreign prosecutors working under the auspices of the U.N. to dismantle corrupt networks that controlled Guatemala. More than a thousand people, including former presidents, judges, law-

makers and other public officials were prosecuted. But under Giammattei, the Attorney General's Office began to pursue the same judges and prosecutors like Sandoval who had led the fight against corruption. More than 40 former justice system figures are in exile.

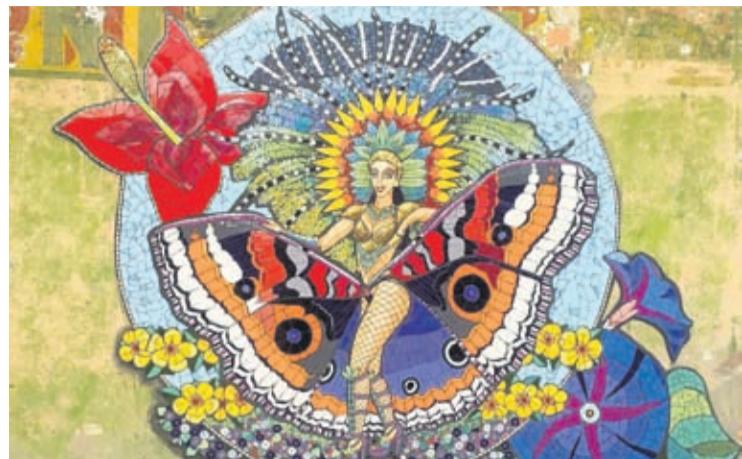
"After two years away I understand better that the Guatemalan state is a seized state and any person who questions it or puts at risk the corrupt system is going to be a victim of exile, will lose his freedom or risk his life," Sandoval said. Sandoval fled Guatemala under cover of darkness just hours after being fired by Attorney General Consuelo Porras in July 2021. □



**In this April 3, 2019 file photo, Juan Francisco Sandoval, Guatemala's lead prosecutor against impunity, poses for a photo during an interview in Guatemala City.**

Associated Press

## Exploring the Mainstreet of San Nicolas



**SAN NICOLAS— At Just 11 miles southeast from Oranjestad you will enter the city San Nicolas, also known as Sunrise City or Chocolate City. A city that is rich in authentic culture and island charm. San Nicolas is Aruba's second largest city and was once a bustling company town dominated by the oil industry since the early 1930's.**

Over the course of four decades, its demographics had changed immensely due to a stream of Afro-Caribbean and South American workers who came to fill the jobs in the oil refinery between the 1920's until the 1960's. To this day traces of the multicultural influences in culinary offerings and customs, housing and population are clearly visible in San Nicolas - more than anywhere else on the island.

### Flow of history

If you are looking for history San Nicolas has it. Here you will find three amazing museums, The Museum of Industry, the Community Museum and the Carnival Euphoria, all within walking distance from one another. The Museum of Industry is situated in the Water Tower in San Nicolas and narrates Aruba's industrial history which began in the 19th century. Here you will learn about gold, aloe, phosphate, oil and the tourism industries which made San Nicolas once a bustling business center. Experience the touching stories of those who were part of this history.

Nicolaas Store built in 1940 and renovated in 2014 is the home of the Community Museum. The collection is remarkable and spans mil-

lennia. Ancient fossils stand next to tableaus of an authentically recreated colonial kitchen and bedroom and 19th-century barbershop, just to name a few of the items of old-time Aruba that has been preserved. A collection of artifacts and other objects of artistic, cultural, historical, or scientific importance can be found here for the purpose of education or enjoyment.

Carnival Euphoria is showcasing Aruba's Carnival. See how carnival has developed over the past 65 years.

### The new San Nicolas

In the shadow of the refinery, an art capital is quietly beginning to grow. This is the new San Nicolas, a place that is starting to become a magnet for all that is young, cool and hip in Aruba. Indeed, San Nicolas has all of the ingredients of an emerging cultural hub — varied history, interesting architecture, and, perhaps most importantly, an urban layout that makes it walkable. As you walk around, the streets are silent but the walls are loud, filled with bright, colorful murals painted by a collection of artists from around the world. Thanks to the efforts of various art organizations



in Aruba, such as Art Rules Aruba and Aruba Art Fair, San Nicolas has had quite the aesthetic makeover with regards to vibrant street art. Each year more and more stunning murals are replacing broken down buildings with colorful art pieces that keep brightening up SunriseCity.

### Must See, Do, Buy & Eat

A little bit of everything can be found in the main street. Stores selling shoes, clothing, jewelry you name it.

Arts & crafts by Cosecha store & Creative Center, a design store in which you can immerse yourself in discovering genuine and locally made arts and crafts which reflect the diversification of the Aruban craft heritage and the artistic supply of artisans. Don't miss out on trying the exquisite food offered by the cafes and restaurants or just enjoy a peaceful walk admiring the murals, mosaic benches and all the history San Nicolas has to offer. □

## Birds of Aruba

**ORANJESTAD — On May 11th, 2010, the Aruba Birdlife Conservation was founded with the aim of protecting the biodiversity in general and birds in and around Aruba in particular.**

Among other things, the foundation will focus on increasing the survival chances of species of wild birds by promoting their preservation and conservation. The foun-

dation publishes the most beautiful pictures of local birds on their social media that show us the beauty of Aruba's birds and nature in general. Aruba Today gives you a little peek with the following pictures and descriptions from the foundations Facebook page.

### The Great Egret

Serenity in Aruba's National Park, a Great Egret flying in peace. When it is peaceful and quite, beautiful

things start happening in nature.

### Canadian in the house

The breeding season is over and it's getting pretty cold in North America. Shore birds have started moving southwards as early as July. This wetland beauty wants to keep its toes warm. Our Canadian friends know exactly where they can do so best. A Greater Yellowlegs rediscovering Aruba's Bubali Wetlands.

### Cabochon

In its living form of so much more value than any gemstone. Aruba's smallest and most master of flight. A top pollinator. A hovering Blenchi inspecting the human who just entered his territory.

English: Blue-tailed Emerald (male)  
Dutch: Blauwstaartsmaragdkolibrie (mannetje).

Aruba's to enjoy. Aruba's to protect. □





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operator for you. □

## Papiamento words and phrases you may want to know!

(Oranjestad)—Aruba is a potting melt of different nationalities, cultures and languages. Primarily for this reason, the average Aruban can understand and speak Dutch, English and Spanish relatively well. However, as much as we pride ourselves in being able to communicate with almost everyone, we cherish our native tongue Papiamento above all else. Want to learn some common words in our language? Here are a few basic words and phrases that can get you a hat tip from an Aruban.

When you arrive at the airport in Aruba, one of the first words in Papiamento you may encounter is "Bon bini." Bon bini in Papiamento means welcome, and is probably the most famous Papiamento word for tourists.

### Hi! Bye!

To be fair, there is no unique way

to say "hello" in Papiamento. At least, not officially. We often just use the English "hello" or "hey", or Dutch "hallo" to greet someone. We do however, always follow it up with "con bay?" or "con ta?" Con bay is a shortened version of "con ta bay?", which essentially means "how are you?"

The word "con" in Papiamento means "how?" and is pronounced with a rounder "o" sounds, like in the English word "cone". "Ta bay" refers to how you are doing.

When we say goodbye, we use the word "ayo" (not like the Ayo Rock Formation, but also...kinda?). We may also use "te oro", which means "see you later".

### Greetings during the day

Most, if not all, languages have different ways to greet according to the time of day, and Papiamento is no different. Since Papiamento is heavily influenced from Portuguese

and Spanish, some of these phrases may look very familiar.

1. Bon dia is used in the morning, up to about noon. Bon dia essentially means good morning. The word "bon" means "good", and while "dia" does not directly mean "morning" in English, it is used often to refer to the morning time.

2. Bon tardi. In the afternoon to early evening hours, we use "bon tardi" to greet people, which means "good afternoon". "Tardi" actually comes from the word "atardi", which directly translates to "afternoon". However, the shortened "tardi" is used to keep the rhythm on the phrase. And the same could be said for our last greeting of the day.

3. Bon noch. You guessed it, "bon noch" means "good night". Just like "tardi", "noch" is actually the shortened version of the word "anochi".

### Yes...no...maybe?

The affirmative and negative expression is very simple in Papiamento. Just like Spanish, our yeses are "si" and our no's are "no". Pretty easy right? If you want to gain some extra points from younger locals, you can also say "se", which is a more casual affirmative used mostly by the younger generation. However, do note: some older generations may find this improper and not respectful, so keep that in mind.

### Thanks man...

Lastly, a word that we can also say more often is "danki", which means literally "thank you". "Danki" is derived from the Dutch word "bedankt". Though we don't really have a translation for "I appreciate it" in English, we do use "masha danki" to convey the message. "Masha" means "a lot" or "very", so "masha danki" means "thank you very much". □

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## Enjoy one of the best views on Aruba at the top of the Hooiberg Hill

(Oranjestad)—If you are a regular hiker, or maybe want to spice up your morning work out session, then you might enjoy one of the most popular climbing sites on the island: The Hooiberg Hill. Accompanied with a 600-step staircase, this hill overlooks a great part of the island, the Caribbean sea, and sometimes even the Santa Anna mountain located in the coastal state of Falcon in Venezuela, providing one of the best views you can get on Aruba.

located at the center district of the island, Santa

Cruz, the Hooiberg Hill is the second highest point on the island at 165 meters above sea level (or about 540 feet above sea level). The highest point is Jamanota Hill at 189 meters (620 feet), located in the Arikok National Park.

The staircase that runs on the side of the hill was first built in 1951, when Mr. Eduardo Tromp constructed it. At that time, the staircase consisted of 900 steps. Over time, as the steps faced erosion, the government decided to renovate these stairs in 1991. This new project delivered the



newer staircase with only 587 steps. However, don't be fooled—it may still be a work out to get on top. In addition, there is now a gazebo placed halfway up the stair for a little rest. The view at this resting stop is also a sight to see. The best time to climb the hill would be early in the morning or right before sunset, as it may not be as hot. However, the hill is of course open all day, every day. □

## Aruba to me

ORANJESTAD — You are back and we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is ..... Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: [news@arubatoday.com](mailto:news@arubatoday.com) and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation.

Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today we received a lovely message from Brian Wheary, New Jersey U.S.A

He wrote to us saying: "Aruba to me is paradise."

Thank you for sending us this wonderful message sharing what Aruba means to you with us and our readers! □



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**baskin BR robbins**

## Episode 52 Ornamental trees

There are numerous ornamental trees that play such a fundamental role in garden landscapes, providing beauty in the form of often spectacular flowers and also a wide range of shapes and textures.

Over the past three or four centuries such trees have spread from their original habitats throughout the tropics, so that today's gardener has an extensive variety of choices from places you may never have seen.

The famous Flamboyant, or Flame Tree (*Delonix regia*), for example, comes from Madagascar. In English known as Flame tree, Gold mohar, Julu tree, Peacock flower and Royal Poinciana.

The flamboyant tree has been described as one of the loveliest and most colorful trees in the world. With a blaze of yellow to crimson red blossoms and delicate fern-like leaves, the magnificent flowers graces Aruba from April until September and all around the earth in tropical climates. Adapted to local conditions this large tree, which naturally assumes a spreading umbrella shape, originated in Madagascar and is now found in many Aruban gardens. It can grow as tall as 18 meters and has smooth greyish-colored bark and attractive feathery, fern-like leaves, which drop annually during the dry season. At the same time as the new leaves appear, the tree is covered with masses of five petal led flowers that are usually bright red-orange but may also appear in pale apricot. Blooming is followed by long, flattened, leathery dark brown or black seed pods.

It's host for lac-insect. It's a good tree to control soil erosion in the semi-arid and arid areas.

Flamboyant requires full sun and adequate space to take its characteristic form.

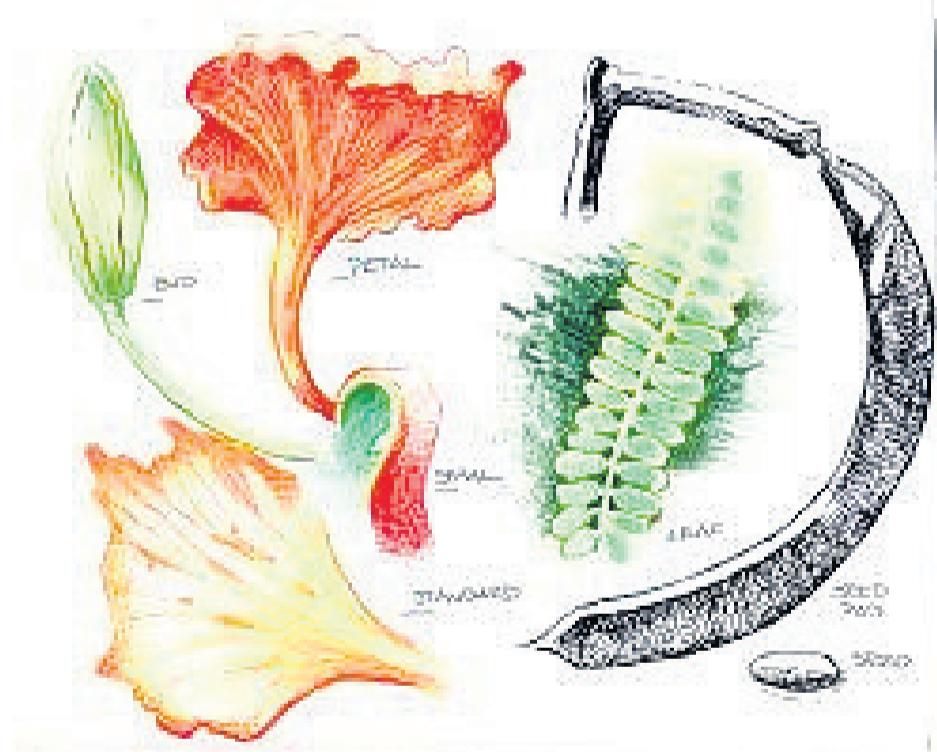
Flamboyant trees are very hardy and pest-resistant and grow well in a wide variety of well-drained soils from acid to alkaline and from loamy to gravelly and, if managed well, even in the dark clay-like soil in parts of Aruba. The trees are tolerant to draught and may be grown close to the sea, but not right on the beach. Flamboyant trees are not able to survive in zones that go below 45 degrees Fahrenheit. In windy areas, trees are susceptible to branch breakage.



It is easy to plant a flamboyant tree. Start with a closed pod, open the pod and remove the seeds. The seeds have a high germination rate for several years. The seeds grow faster when they are either nicked with a knife or rubbed for about fifteen seconds with sandpaper then soaked overnight. Alternatively you may place the seeds in a pot of water, bring it to the boiling point, remove the pan from the heat source, and leave the seeds in the water until it is cooled. Once the water is drained the seeds are ready to plant; plant them in a location that receives full sun. Plant three or four seeds per tree and thin to the strongest one once they have sprouted. Trees may also be grown from branch cuttings of the tree. It is advised not to plant flamboyant trees close to sidewalks as the shallow roots may protrude through the sidewalk and present a tripping hazard.

In addition to providing delightful dappled shade all year and a profusion of flowers for almost half of the year, the bark and flowers of the tree are rich in phytochemicals and flavonoids and contain antimicrobial, antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties and have been used for hepatic protection and as a treatment for diarrhea. The dried pods on the tree produce a nice crackling sound in the wind and are easily gathered on the ground to be used as a fuel for fire.

The extract of *Delonix regia* is known to have medicinal properties. The plant is used in several countries to prepare extracts with antimicrobial and antifungal activities. *Delonix regia* Rafin, with an impressive range of medicinal and biological properties, has been used in the folk medicine systems of several civilizations like for the treatment of constipation, inflammation, arthritis, hemiplegia, leucorrhoea and rheumatism. □



## Did you know about... Basic driving rules on Aruba (part 2)



**(Oranjestad)—In Yesterday's issue, we've provided some basic rules when driving on the four-lane highways and roundabouts on the island. Today, we want to offer you more tips and tricks when it comes to driving on the roads and highways of Aruba.**

**Speed limit in certain areas**  
As mentioned in yesterday's issue, the legal minimum and maximum speed limit on the island is 50 and 80 km/h respectively. However, there are some areas where it is mandated to drive up to a certain speed. This is always indicated by a circular traffic sign with red border and the number 50 on it. Signs like these are always paired by a similar sign with the number crossed out further down the road. This means that the mandate for this speed is now over; you may increase your velocity. Red borders on traffic sign—whether it's a circle or triangle—usually signal a warning, prohibition or preference.

Besides the "50" sign, you may also encounter a traffic sign that says "bebouwde kom". These can be found in San Nicolas and Oranjestad. Bebouwde kom signs are rectangular and blue, and essentially tell you that you are in a heavily inhabited area. The maximum speed limit in a bebouwde kom is 50 km/h. Just like the previous pair,

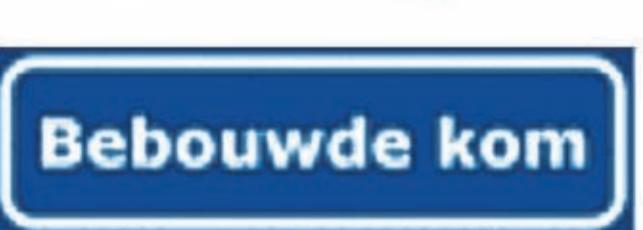
bebouwde kom signs are also paired with a similar sign crossed out.

### Priority signs

On the main roads of Aruba (not the highways), you may see a yellow, squared sign with a white border. This sign tells you that on this road, you have priority and all other traffic should yield to you. This sign can be seen in Savaneta for example. So, if you are driving on the main road in Savaneta going to San Nicolas, you are driving on a single long road, and other cars that want to get on this main road or cross it, either from an intersection or from a dirt road, must all wait until traffic on the main road is clear. In other words, you do not have to stop for them. This sign too has a counter part that indicates that your priority is over.

Another priority sign you may encounter is a triangle sign with a red border and something that looks like a cross. You'll see this sign in an intersection. The general rule of thumb for crossing an intersection that do not contain traffic lights, roundabouts, sign or arrows on the road, is to always yield for traffic on your right. However, if you encounter this sign on your side of the intersection, you have priority over the other cars, even the one on your right.

However, be careful not to confuse this sign with a simi-



lar up-side down triangle, also found on intersections. This sign is a prohibition sign, telling you that you have to stop and give other cars priority. Of course you also have a "stop" sign that mean the same thing. The stop sign is generally used for tricky intersections with minimal view of opposite incoming traffic.

These are some of the basic rules that you would have to know if you decide to drive on the island. These are of course other traffic signs, and we recommend you visit aruba-travelguide.com for an extensive overview of all traffic signs used on Aruba. □

**CROSSWORD**

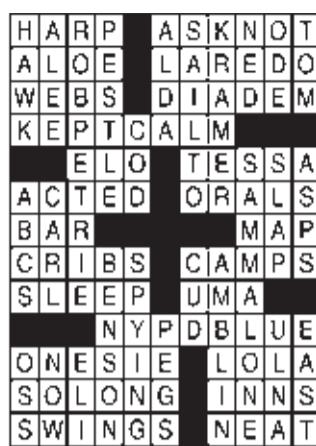
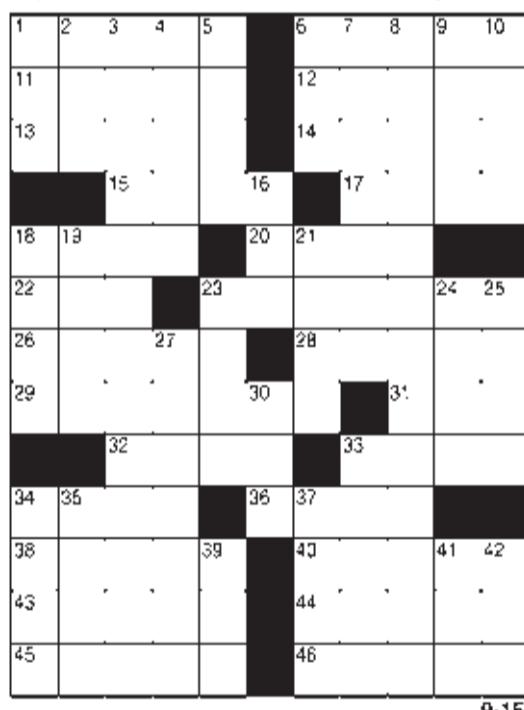
By THOMAS JOSEPH

**ACROSS**

- 1 Intense beam
- 2 Unmovable
- 11 Sung story
- 12 Plain silly
- 13 J.R. Ewing, for one
- 14 Evil spirit
- 15 Movie pooch
- 17 Budget item
- 18 Muscle quality
- 20 Movie pooch
- 22 Outdated
- 23 Passes along, as a present
- 26 Cover words
- 28 Shop turner
- 29 Augment
- 31 Derby, e.g.
- 32 Amorous archer
- 33 Fine study
- 34 Amazon rodent
- 36 A fan of
- 38 Japanese cartoon genre
- 40 "Lou Grant" star
- 43 Loosen, as laces
- 44 "Superman" star
- 45 Tier
- 46 TV oldie "Ben —"

**DOWN**

- 1 Whole bunch
- 2 Clumsy one
- 3 Emmy-winning HBO series
- 4 Wipe away
- 5 Crazy talk
- 6 Relieve (of)
- 7 Resistance to change
- 8 Emmy-winning HBO series
- 9 A party to 10 Car scar
- 16 Consumed
- 18 Pledge week
- 30 CBS series with spinoffs
- 19 Ken of "thirty-something"
- 21 Lusty look
- 23 Nevada city
- 24 Not this
- 25 Filming sites
- 27 1960s TV western
- 30 CBS series with spinoffs
- 33 Puzzled
- 34 Giamatti of "Billions"
- 35 "True Blood" star Paquin
- 37 Dealer's foe
- 39 Poetic "always"
- 41 Genesis woman
- 42 Spanish king

**Yesterday's answer**

A X Y D I B A A X R  
is L O N G F E L L O W

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

**9-15****CRYPTOQUOTE**

I R R U A Y I I D Z R R C Y E C X R

F D Y H E B J E B I R R U D R J P X L E F Z Y D

C X R Q C J D Q . — P J Q R A I J Q R O  
Yesterday's Cryptoquote: THERE AIN'T A MAN LIVIN' WHO HASN'T TALKED TO HIS DOG. — HANK WILLIAMS SR.

**An Airbnb, Vrbo or other rental host ghosted you. Now what?**By SALLY FRENCH  
of NerdWallet

Lauren Gumpert was en route to a vacation on the island of Chios, Greece, in July, where she was set to stay in an Airbnb for five nights with her best friend. But upon her arrival in Athens to connect to her flight to Chios, she received a WhatsApp message from someone stating that their dad owned the Airbnb property, but that they managed it. The son said they'd be out of town and that their dad didn't speak English but that Gumpert would still be able to check in with the dad.

Gumpert, who works for the travel insurance company Faye, is no stranger to stories of travel mishaps. She sensed something was off but forged ahead with the Chios flight. When she arrived at the meeting spot near the Airbnb, no one was there.

"It was hot and not in a touristy area, so it didn't feel great," she says. "We were exhausted from the flights and just wanted to drop our bags, so that was frustrating."

She had an international cell phone plan, so after 15 minutes of waiting for the owner, she called Airbnb customer service. An hour later, an Airbnb customer service agent finally offered to rebook them elsewhere. But with no other suitable Airbnb listings, Gumpert declined the offer. Airbnb then offered to pay for two nights at a hotel.

"Airbnb didn't give any type of nightly cap on cost, and frankly the island



A sign is displayed outside a home in Wheeling, Ill., Thursday, May 5, 2022.

Associated Press

didn't have a ton of options," she said. "We found a great hotel and sent Airbnb the receipt."

The two-night hotel stay came out to \$443.50, and Gumpert received a reimbursement from Airbnb to her bank account in a few days. Airbnb also refunded the \$434.22 cost of her original five-night reservation. As for the other three nights they were supposed to spend in Chios? Gumpert took the opportunity to check out another Greek island, where she booked a last-minute stay.

**WHAT HAPPENS IF YOUR HOST DOESN'T SHOW UP**

Gumpert contacted Airbnb as soon as she realized her host wasn't there and says Airbnb appropriately compensated her for the inconvenience.

"Luckily, my friend and I have traveled so much that when things go wrong, we just quickly pivot and laugh it off," she said. "We stayed two nights in the other hotel, had a great time, then hopped on a ferry to Samos, Greece, for

the rest of our trip." But not all vacation rental companies have robust customer support, and not all will be as generous with compensation. Plus, not all travelers will be able to pivot like Gumpert.

And it's not just vacation rental companies, like Airbnb or Vrbo, where ghosting is a risk. It's a challenge facing the ever-growing list of peer-to-peer travel platforms. That includes RV rental companies like Outdoorsy or RVshare, and rental car companies like Turo. There's also a boat equivalent called GetMyBoat.

Each company has its own set of policies to mitigate mishaps. Some immediately rebook the closest alternative, which can often entail an upgrade. If the owner of the Toyota you booked through Turo doesn't show up, the company might instead send a Tesla.

But even an upgraded Tesla might not come without some stress. Turo says you need to wait at least 30 minutes past the trip start time before you can contact customer support, according to a note on its help page. That's 30 minutes you might be sitting on a curb in a foreign city, followed by the transport time hauling your bags to a different location once the company has found an alternative. □

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# NASA releases UFO report and says more science and less stigma are needed to understand them

By MARCIA DUNN  
AP Aerospace Writer

**CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla.** (AP) — NASA said Thursday that the study of UFOs will require new scientific techniques, including advanced satellites as well as a shift in how unidentified flying objects are perceived.

The space agency released the findings after a yearlong study into UFOs. In its 33-page report, an independent team commissioned by NASA cautioned that the negative perception surrounding UFOs poses an obstacle to collecting data. But officials said NASA's involvement should help reduce the stigma around what it calls UAPs, or unidentified anomalous phenomena.

"We want to shift the conversation about UAPs from sensationalism to science," NASA Administrator Bill Nelson said. He promised an open and transparent approach.

Officials stressed the panel found no evidence that UAPs had extraterrestrial origin. But Nelson acknowledged with billions of stars in billions of galaxies out there, another Earth could exist.

"If you ask me, do I believe there's life in a universe that is so vast that it's hard for me to comprehend how big it is, my personal



Workers on scaffolding repaint the NASA logo near the top of the Vehicle Assembly Building at the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Fla., Wednesday, May 20, 2020.

Associated Press

answer is yes," Nelson said at a news conference. His own scientists put the likelihood of life on another Earth-like planet at "at least a trillion."

When pressed by reporters on whether the U.S. or other governments are hiding aliens or otherworldly spaceships, Nelson said: "Show me the evidence."

NASA has said it doesn't actively search for unexplained sightings. But it operates a fleet of Earth-circling spacecraft that can help determine, for example, whether weather is behind a strange event.

The 16-member panel noted that artificial intelligence and machine learning are essential for identifying rare occurrences, including UFOs.

NASA recently appointed a director for UFO research, but is not divulging the identity to protect them from the kind of threats and harassment faced by the panel members during the study.

"That's in part why we are not splashing the name of our new director out there



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because science needs to be free. Science needs to undergo a real and rigorous and rational process, and you need the freedom of thought to be able to do that," said Dan Evans, NASA's liaison with the panel.

No top-secret files were accessed by the scientists, aviation and artificial intelligence experts, and retired NASA astronaut Scott Kelly, the first American to spend nearly a year in space. Instead, the group relied on unclassified data in an attempt to better understand unexplained sightings in the sky. Officials said there are so few high-quality observations that no scientific conclusions can be drawn. □



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**How to reach us!**

The map shows the layout of downtown Aruba with various streets labeled: Weststraat, Schepstraat, Caya G.F. Belico Croes, Caya G.J. L.G. Smith Boulevard, Royal Plaza Mall, and High Rise Hotel. A magnifying glass highlights the location of the ARUBA TODAY and BONDIA offices on Weststraat.

## For several episodes this fall, '60 Minutes' will become 90 minutes

By DAVID BAUDER

AP Media Writer

**NEW YORK (AP)**—The iconic stopwatch won't be reset, but for six episodes this fall, "60 Minutes" will become 90 minutes.

The CBS newsmagazine is stretching on some Sundays when CBS airs an NFL doubleheader, starting Oct. 8. Often, the show doesn't air until 7:30 p.m. on the East Coast those nights (it usually starts at 7 p.m.).

The request to Bill Owens, the show's executive producer, came from top CBS executive George Cheeks, and predated the strikes that have paralyzed Hollywood and left networks looking for more content. Owens said he needed to weigh whether the three extra hours across the six episodes would dilute the broadcast.

"My job is to protect the place," he said. "I don't ever want to harm a hair on the head of '60 Minutes.'" There will generally be two extra pieces on the 90-minute nights, and correspondents are already lobbying for more time to tell their stories. Extra producers have been brought in. Owens said the additional stories would likely lean toward feature or adventure fare, like one Bill Whitaker



This image released by CBS News shows, from left, Sharyn Alfonsi, L. Jon Wertheim, Bill Whitaker, Lesley Stahl, Scott Pelley, Cecilia Vega, Anderson Cooper and Executive Producer Bill Owens, from the CBS news series "60 Minutes."

Associated Press

is preparing about a motorcycle race on the Isle of Man in the Irish Sea.

More than a half century in, "60 Minutes" remains the most popular show in television news. It averaged close to nine million viewers each week last season, ranking first among non-sports, prime-time programs in live viewing, seventh when a time-delayed audience of up to a week is added, the Nielsen company said.

The show's stories get an additional 15 million views

each week on various digital platforms, CBS said. That's a different measurement than "viewers," however, and doesn't necessarily correspond to 15 million extra people.

"60 Minutes" has almost completely turned over its correspondent corps since its glory years, with Lesley Stahl remaining as the elder stateswoman. She began in 1991.

The latest newbie is former ABC correspondent Cecilia Vega, who joined earlier this year. A bit starstruck,

she admits that "I still take videos and send them to my mom when I'm walking around the hallways in my office."

She spoke via phone from Poland, where she is working on what she expects will be one of the most important stories in her career, about Ukrainian children who were kidnapped and sent to Russia during the war. She was following one woman who had been working for months to retrieve a relative.

"We are telling what is go-

ing on in the war through the eyes of women and children," she said, "and I can't think of anything that is more gut-wrenching."

Owens said that "60 Minutes" has eight stories about the war in Ukraine in the works for its 56th season, which starts Sunday. Besides Vega, Whitaker and Scott Pelley who won an Edward R. Murrow award for four stories he has done from the war are both working on the topic. The show is keeping a close eye on how American money is being spent in Ukraine, for example, and examining how the country's arts and culture has been affected by the Russian invasion.

"We're doing shows about the entirety of the country so people have a sense of what it's like when you're invaded," Owens said.

The attention is intentional. Owens, entering his fifth year as the newsmagazine's top executive, said he believed the Russian invasion of a neighbor in Europe is not getting enough coverage in the U.S. media, either because it's too expensive to devote resources or executives are worried that viewers are getting fatigued about the topic. □

## 'Just Ken' no more? Barbie sidekick among 12 finalists for National Toy Hall of Fame

**ROCHESTER, N.Y. (AP)**—Is it finally time for Barbie's sidekick to go from being "just Ken" to National Toy Hall of Fame inductee?

The Mattel doll introduced in 1961 and brought to life by Ryan Gosling in the blockbuster "Barbie" movie is among 12 finalists being considered for induction this year, the Hall of Fame announced Wednesday. He is up against baseball cards, Battleship, bingo, Bop It, Cabbage Patch Kids, Choose Your Own Adventure gamebooks, Connect 4, Little Tykes Cozy Coupe, Nerf, slime and Teenage Mutant Ninja Tur-

tles. The National Toy Hall of Fame, housed at The



This photo provided by The Strong National Museum of Play in Rochester, N.Y., shows the 12 finalists being considered for induction into the National Toy Hall of Fame.

Associated Press

Strong Museum in Rochester, is marking its 25th anniversary with a strong slate of finalists, said Christopher Bensch, vice president for collections.

"This may have been the year of Barbie at the box office, but perhaps Ken will share some of the spotlight by getting inducted," Bensch said of the character, who in the movie sings "I'm Just Ken."

Barbie was inducted as part of the Hall of Fame's inaugural class in 1998.

This year's honorees will be inducted Nov. 9 following voting by a selection committee and the public. Each

member of the 22-person expert committee will cast ballots for the top three.

The three toys receiving the most public votes by Sept. 20 will make up a single ballot. Anyone can nominate a toy for the Hall of Fame, but to be considered for induction, toys must have achieved icon status and longevity across generations. They also must be innovative and foster learning or creativity through play.

Last year, Lite-Brite, Masters of the Universe and the top were inducted, bringing to 80 the number of honorees to date. □

## Thomas trying to get on track at Fortinet before Ryder Cup

By MICHAEL WAGAMAN

Associated Press

**NAPA, Calif. (AP)** — Justin Thomas has a lot of work to do at the PGA Tour's Fortinet Championship this week. Most importantly, he has an opportunity to sharpen his game ahead of Ryder Cup two weeks away.

Thomas, the former No. 1 player in the world who was a captain's pick for the Ryder Cup, hasn't played since finishing 12th at the Wyndham Championship in Greensboro, North Carolina on Aug. 6. He is looking forward to getting back on course.

"With the way the season ended last year, I just didn't want to go take that long off (from) competitive golf," said Thomas, adding he didn't pick up a club for two weeks after his season ended. "It worked out even better after getting picked for the Ryder Cup to get some competition under my belt before going there. I haven't gone this long without competitive golf in a while so I'm excited."

Thomas is one of four members of the Ryder Cup team playing at the Silverado Resort in the heart of the Northern California's wine valley. He joins two-time defending champion Max Homa, U.S. captain Zach



Justin Thomas talks with caddie Jim "Bones" Mackay before hitting from the second tee of the Silverado Resort North Course during the first round of the Fortinet Championship PGA golf tournament in Napa, Calif., Thursday, Sept. 14, 2023.

Associated Press

Johnson and assistant captain Stewart Cink, who won in Napa in 2000.

Homa at No. 7 is the only player from the top 10 in the world in Napa. He is trying to become the first player to win the same tournament three straight years since Steve Stricker at the John Deere Classic from 2009 to 2011.

Cink expects that the hype over Thomas and Homa will be overblown one way or the other.

"I think it's inevitable that whatever Max and J.T. do

this week will be overstated to the good or to the bad," Cink said this week. "I hope they both win. I don't think that's possible, but I hope they both win."

For most other players, the fall portion is all about is about positioning for the start of 2024.

The FedEx Cup standings from Aug. 14 carry over, and the top 125 after this seven-tournament stretch will retain full PGA Tour cards. The leading 10 players outside the top 50 will be eligible for the first two

\$20 million signature events at Pebble Beach and Riviera.

Thomas fits into that category, though he likely would get one of the four sponsor exemptions for the big-money events. His focus is squarely on ending a stretch of 16 months without a victory.

"All it takes is one week, one stretch, that can just completely flip everything and nobody even talks or references it any more," Thomas said.

Thomas confirmed he has

quit working with putting coach John Graham and has reduced the role that his father, Mike, had as his swing coach. There were no major reasons for the splits other than Thomas felt he needed to be more accountable for his own mistakes.

"They were there too often to where I became too dependent on them," Thomas said. "Then I just lost all ownership, all accountability to where when things went wrong, I was looking to them to answer the questions instead of I'm the one that needs to figure it out at some point."

Thomas also tinkered with his swing and is in the midst of changing to a longer driver.

"I'm fortunate where I'm already on the Ryder Cup team so I don't need to prove anything for that," he said. "I'm just going to go out this week and try to play as well as I can."

Thomas recently joined Homa and the rest of the U.S. Ryder Cup team on a trip to Italy as part of a scouting trip to the course where that competition will be played.

Homa, who made his U.S. team debut in the President's Cup last year, was blown away by what he saw. □

## NFL extends deal to continue playing games at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium

**LONDON (AP)** — The NFL will continue staging at least two games per year at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium through the 2029 season, the league announced Thursday.

The deal with the Premier League soccer club is a two-year extension on their original long-term agreement to play regular-season games at Tottenham's \$1.6 billion facility.

Tottenham's stadium was custom built with an NFL field below the Premier League team's moveable soccer pitch.

The grass soccer field splits into three sections before

it's moved to make way for the astroturf underneath. The stadium, which features designated NFL locker rooms and capacity seating of nearly 63,000, has hosted six games so far.

"NFL gamedays at our stadium are special occasions where we see fans from around the world descend on Tottenham, bringing so much vibrancy to the High Road and supporting our local economy," Tottenham chairman Daniel Levy said.

Under the deal, the stadium gets an official designation as "Home of the NFL in the UK."

Wembley Stadium has hosted the majority of the NFL games in London, starting in 2007.

Three NFL games are scheduled in the British capital this season; one at Wembley and two at Tottenham.

The Jacksonville Jaguars play back-to-back games first against the Atlanta Falcons on Oct. 1 at Wembley before facing the Buffalo Bills the following Sunday at Tottenham.

On Oct. 15, the Baltimore Ravens play the Tennessee Titans at Tottenham. □



Green Bay Packers running back Aaron Jones (33) carries the ball during the second half of an NFL football game against the New York Giants at the Tottenham Hotspur stadium in London, on Oct. 9, 2022.

Associated Press

## Acuña vs. Betts showdown for NL MVP highlights MLB's award races as the season winds down

By DAVID BRANDT

AP Baseball Writer

Ronald Acuña Jr. has the kind of numbers that make the young Atlanta Braves star a no-doubter for the National League MVP award.

Then again, so does Dodgers standout Mookie Betts and his teammate, Freddie Freeman.

It's getting close to the post-season for Major League Baseball, which also means it's close to award season. Some of the races are tighter than others, and it appears the NL MVP race is a particularly epic chase.

Acuña has been the favorite for months. He's the catalyst for a robust Braves offense that leads the big leagues by scoring nearly six runs per game. The 25-year-old outfielder even created his very own club this season, becoming the one and only player in MLB history with at least 30 homers and 60 stolen bases.

Who could beat that?

Well, Betts is certainly trying. The 2018 AL MVP has somehow put himself into the discussion with a stellar second half that has propelled the Dodgers to the top of the NL West. He's batting .311 with 37 doubles, 39 homers, 103 RBIs and 11 stolen bases all while moving between right field, second base and even shortstop.



Atlanta Braves' Ronald Acuña Jr. reacts after hitting a two-run home run against Philadelphia Phillies pitcher Zack Wheeler during the fifth inning of a baseball game, Tuesday, Sept. 12, 2023, in Philadelphia.

If advanced metrics are your thing, Betts has a 7.9 Wins Above Replacement while Acuña is at 7.3, according to FanGraphs.

Then there's Freeman, the 2020 NL MVP, who is batting .339 with 55 doubles, 26 homers, 93 RBIs and 18 stolen bases.

### NL MVP

The favorite: Acuña Jr.

In the mix: Betts, Freeman, Matt Olson (Braves).

The race: It still feels like Acuña is a sizable favorite thanks to a combina-

tion of speed and power that's never been seen in the big leagues. Betts and Freeman are also poised to receive plenty of love from voters. And let's take a minute to appreciate Olson, a 51-homer first baseman who has been a force all season.

### AL MVP

The favorite: Shohei Ohtani, Los Angeles Angels.

In the mix: Corey Seager (Rangers), Marcus Semien (Rangers), Kyle Tucker (Astros).

The race: Ohtani's likely got this one wrapped up. His two-way prowess was derailed by a torn elbow ligament in August, but for five months, he treated baseball fans to one of the most impressive performances in MLB history. Seager and Semien have been fantastic for a Rangers team that is vastly improved but backsliding in September. Tucker has emerged as an under-the-radar star for the defending World Series champ.

**Associated Press**

### NL CY YOUNG

The favorite: Blake Snell, San Diego Padres.

In the mix: Zack Gallen (Diamondbacks), Justin Steele (Cubs), Spencer Strider (Braves).

The race:

This one is still up for grabs in the season's final weeks. Snell probably has the best overall numbers, but he'll be hurt by the fact that the Padres have underachieved this season. Gallen recently pitched a shutout against the Cubs, helping his case, but he was knocked around by the Mets on Wednesday. Speaking of the Cubs, Steele has come out of nowhere to be the ace for the surprising playoff contenders. Strider's ERA has crept upward over the past month, but it's hard to ignore those 250 strikeouts.

### AL CY YOUNG

The favorite: Gerrit Cole, New York Yankees.

In the mix: Luis Castillo (Mariners), Sonny Gray (Twins).

The race: The Yankees have been a huge disappointment this season, but it's not Cole's fault. The veteran right-hander has a 13-4 record, 2.79 ERA and 204 strikeouts. Castillo has been a key cog for the Mariners, who have made an unlikely charge up the standings since they were sellers at the trade deadline. □



Canada's Frank Dancevic, right, congratulates Canada's Vasek Pospisil after he defeated Sweden's Leo Borg during their Davis Cup group stage tennis match at the Unipol Arena, Bologna, Italy, Thursday, Sept. 14, 2023.

**Associated Press**

**SPLIT, Croatia (AP)** — Frances Tiafoe was beaten for the second straight time and the United States lost

to the Netherlands in the group stage of the Davis Cup Finals on Thursday. Tallon Griekspoor defeated

## U.S. beaten in Davis Cup Finals as Tiafoe loses again

Tiafoe 6-3, 6-7 (7), 7-6 (3) to secure the Netherlands the victory in Group D in Split. Botic Van de Zandschulp had beaten Tommy Paul 7-6 (2), 6-2 in the opening singles match. Tiafoe had lost to Croatian Borna Gojo on Wednesday in a tie the Americans won 2-1.

The Netherlands had opened with a win against Finland. Defending champion Canada earlier defeated Sweden to take the lead in Group A.

Gabriel Diallo secured the Canadians the point with a

6-4, 6-3 win over Elias Ymer. Vasek Pospisil had given Canada a 1-0 lead by defeating Leo Borg 7-6 (5), 5-7, 6-2. Borg is the son of 11-time Grand Slam champion Bjorn Borg.

Canada is trying to secure its spot in the quarterfinals for the third time in its last four appearances, while Sweden was looking to make it to the last eight for the second time in three years.

Sweden had won the two times that the nations faced each other, includ-

ing in the group stage in Madrid in 2021, though Canada was without its top stars at the time — Felix Auger-Aliassime and Denis Shapovalov.

Australia defeated France 2-1 after Matthew Ebden and Max Purcell defeated Nicolas Mahut and Edouard Roger-Vasselin 7-5, 6-3 in the decisive doubles match in Group B in Manchester. In the singles, Adrian Mannarino had defeated Purcell, while and Alex de Minaur beat Ugo Humbert. □